

# Do booze ads touch young athletes?

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knowing full well the consequences. "Although they felt very bad about losing the season, they felt better about themselves telling us what happened. I know it was very painful, because I spent some time with the kids."

Vigna said he is fairly certain there were others involved who didn't step forward at the time and finished the season.

"Teen-agers are part of a social milieu, and they're conscious of what their friends think. If they're with that kind of crowd, I think they will participate (drink)."

"When it happens, I think they let the team down."

DAVE HALL is a natural athlete. He was so good in football, basketball and track at Livonia Stevenson that he earned a full athletic scholarship to the University of Michigan, where he has completed his freshman year.

He echoes many of Vigna's sentiments.

Hall said he attended many parties where alcohol may have been avail-

able, but never really felt tempted to drink himself.

"I'm not interested in it," he said, adding that there was no pressure to drink among his friends, either.

"It depends who your friends are." And about drinking in school: "I wouldn't say not (students) and I wouldn't say a majority," Hall said. Hall said that just getting together was enough reason to party in his crowd.

"Some parties (alcohol) is there, but I don't think it's the overriding reason."

However, Hall agreed that there are different kinds of parties and different kinds of personalities to whom drinking may have been the attraction.

Hall also recognizes the necessity of enforcing rules for team unity and discipline.

"If the coach made the rules, I would say they pretty much have to be automatic. I would feel bad, but they would have to be enforced."

DICK MILDNER, who has worked as an athletic trainer in both the professional and collegiate ranks, operates

**'I think the kids pick it up from TV. If the pros do it, why can't they? When athletes make commercials, kids look up to athletes.'**

—Bill Pinnell  
athletic director

the Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine Center in Livonia.

He relates a study with which he was involved while a graduate student at Purdue University.

"(Three) kids in class volunteered to drink. We then gave them a reaction test."

"The more they drank, the slower the reaction time both visually and soundwise. It was always worse — every kid who did this."

Milder said that while a specific part of an athlete's body may not be more susceptible to injury, he certainly is more likely to be injured if under the influence of alcohol due to slower reaction time.

PINNELL SAID he believes that kids are influenced to drink by beer commercials on television.

"I think kids pick it up from TV. If the pros do it, why can't they? When athletes make commercials, kids look up to athletes."

However, Joel Cohen, a Ph.D. and licensed psychologist, disagrees.

"Commercials are a symptom of the problem, not the problem," he said. "What you see in commercials represents an attitude in society, an attitude that drinking is a macho thing — you prove how big a man you are among

the boys.

"Advertisers can't put something into ads that isn't there. They hook into something there below the surface."

Cohen is of the opinion that a youngster who watches many beer commercials is no more likely to develop a drinking problem than another youngster who is not exposed to the commercials.

"Attitude in the family makes the difference," Cohen said. Other psychologists may agree or disagree.

THE MILLER Brewing Co., headquartered in Milwaukee, Wis., will not disclose the size of its advertising budget.

Miller helps sponsor, with broadcast advertising, such events as the Pro Bowlers Tour, Monday Night Football, Monday Night Baseball, the World Series, the Indianapolis 500 and the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament.

Television is our major advertising medium. Therefore, we obviously would not like to see alcohol advertising banned from television," said a spokeswoman from Miller's corporate

affairs department.

"Since sports programming is very popular among male adults, those whom we try to reach with our advertising message, we sponsor many sports broadcasts," she said.

"The sponsorship is the most effective and efficient way of reaching beer consumers of legal drinking age."

What would happen to televised and radio coverage of sporting events if advertising for alcoholic beverages were banned from the airwaves as is advertising for smoking products. Again, another prepared response.

"We have no way of judging the impact a ban on alcohol advertising would have on television. However, we doubt such a ban would noticeably affect sports programming since such programming is an attractive property for many products."

Miller also sponsors, without much publicity or fanfare, fundraising activities for the U.S. track and field team, the ski team, the boxing team and the cycling team — all involving amateur athletes.

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